

Mayor's Quarterly Report 2014

Town of Smyrna, Delaware



MAYOR H. JOANNE MASTEN
JULY 2014 - SEPTEMBER 2014





Town of Smyrna

H. JOANNE MASTEN, MAYOR

October 2014

Dear Citizens:

The Fourth of July is not the only time to celebrate our great nation and to show our patriotism. The month of November is just as significant. Here are two very important dates to remember!

November 4th is Election Day! Next week, you will have the opportunity to elect a United States Senator, a United States Congressperson, Delaware's Attorney General, State Treasurer, State Auditor, and a host of Kent County Levy Court Officials. These public officials will make major decisions on your behalf for years to come. Take a moment to study the candidate's stance on issues, and then make an informed decision. Remember, many of our nation's ancestors (including women and persons of color) fought and died for the right to vote. Please honor their memory by voting!

We are also very pleased to recognize Veterans Day next month. On the evening of Thursday, November 6, we will honor seven local military veterans at Smyrna's Annual Veterans Day Recognition Ceremony. The event will be held at the Smyrna Opera House beginning at 6:30pm. All are welcome and encouraged to attend. The Veterans Day Recognition Program, created by Councilmember John Embert in 2013, aims to show our appreciation to local veterans and active military service members. I believe Councilmember Embert says it best, *"As we get preoccupied with our own daily lives, we often forget about the sacrifices our veterans, active service members, and their families have made in the defense of our nation. There are so many heroic men and women living right here in Smyrna who have served our nation with bravery and honor. I believe it is fitting that we commend them and thank them for their service and dedication."* I wholeheartedly agree!

Finally, I am pleased to submit my quarterly report to you. The report, covering the period July 2014 to September 2014, highlights a variety of town activities and initiatives. I believe you will be pleased with the town's commitment to everyday excellence and the provision of impartial municipal services to all.

On behalf of the entire Smyrna Town Council and all town employees, we wish you a very patriotic season!

Respectfully,

H. Joanne Masten
H. Joanne Masten
Mayor



SMYRNA TOWN COUNCIL

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Quarterly Departmental Updates:
Reporting Period July 2014 – September 2014

Accounting and Business Services Department

Gary Stulir, Manager

For the time period 7/1/2014 – 9/30/2014, the Accounting and Business Services Department (ABS) processed 15,469 individual payments totaling over \$6.4million. A significant portion of these individual payments were sent through the town's lockbox. The lockbox is a safe, secure, bank-staffed process that offers a means of processing payments more efficiently, freeing up storage space. The Town also continues to administer the free in-house direct debit for utility payments. ABS also issued 1007 checks totaling over \$5.9million and has processed the 2014 tax receipts and issued refunds to those who overpaid their property taxes.

As the department administers numerous accounting and financial management functions, staff participated in essential training and continuing education opportunities which complemented their existing skills and has led to increased productivity and overall operational efficiency. This included accounting training provided by SunGard as well as human resources training sessions offered by the Society of Human Resource Management.

Other activities include continuous effort to update the Town Employee and Police Pension Plans as well as providing technical support to several Town Council Committees including Personnel, Finance, 3-5 year Planning Subcommittee, and Safety.

Building and Inspections Department

Dawn Thompson, Interim Manager

With the summer retirement of Mr. Grant Prichard, Dawn Thompson was appointed Interim Manager of the Building and Inspections Department effective August 23, 2014.

Below is a chart depicting the number and valuation of building permits issued for the period June 2014 – September 2014:

Type of Construction	Quantity	Construction Value	Permit Fees	Admin. Fees	C/O Fees
Commercial Buildings	1	\$528,000	\$5,837	\$0	\$40
Tenant Fit-Outs	4	35,500	399	326	120
Signs	8	30,517	1,029	48	0
Single Family	26	3,868,098	43,478	40	1,040
Apartments	0	0	0	0	0
Townhomes	8	687,045	7,800	0	320
Additions (includes decks)	13	45,660	883	91	0
Renovations (Includes windows, roof, siding, etc.)	19	154,905	2,224	0	0

Fences	22	47,099	1,214	124	0
Sheds	7	12,491	379	62	0
Pools/Hot tubs	16	33,862	959	40	0
Manuf. Homes	2	113,925	1,323	0	40
Misc.	21	39,695	1545	252	0
Demolition	0	0	0	0	0
Change of Use	0	0	0	0	0
Total	149	\$5,596,797	\$67,070	\$983	\$1,560

Information Technology & Billing Department

James Markow, Manager

The Information Technology & Billing Department (ITB) has implemented CodeRed, a high-speed emergency communication and notification system developed by Emergency Communications Network (ECN). The Town will utilize CodeRed to notify residents of emergencies near them, severe weather warnings, road construction/closures, water main breaks, electric outages, general notifications, etc. Citizens may sign-up by completing the registration process on the CodeRed website, which can be accessed through www.smyrna.delaware.gov.

Library

Beverly Hirt, Director

With funds from the Town of Smyrna, a corporate grant from Walmart, and generous donations from local businesses and citizens of Smyrna, Clayton and surrounding areas of northern Kent County, the Smyrna Public Library's summer reading program was a great success. The registered participants were: 111 Read to Me/Family Readers; 25 Teen Readers; 217 Independent Readers; 2 Special Needs Readers; 9 Adult Readers and 66 Daycare Children.

2014 Summer Reading Program Awards

Category	First Place	Second Place	Third Place	Fourth Place
Read to Me/ Family Readers	Jacie McCaughin 1,066 Books Read	Briana Shahan 568 Books Read	Lanie Hazzardn 487 Books Read	
First Grade	Hadassah Pierre-Louis 250 Hours Read	Olivia Bruno 60 Hours Read	Michael Thorp, Jr. 40 Hours Read	
Second Grade	Keely Adams 38 Hours Read	Xavier Wightman 30 Hours Read		
Third Grade	Cheyenne Silves 80 Hours Read	Chad Cerutti 60 Hours Read	Danielle Carter 46 Hours Read	
Fourth Grade	Abigail Pierri-Louis 260 Hours Read	Malachi Aiken 93 Hours Read	Malie Timmons 810 Hours Read	
Fifth Grade	Nathanael Pierre-Louis 270 Hours Read	Alison Cherriman 53 Hours Read	Wayne Knight 60 Hours Read	

Sixth Grade	Teresa Pena 105.25 Hours Read	Lydia Klecan 102 Hours Read	Elisabeth Mancari 70 Hours Read	Hannah Osborne 40 Hours Read
Seventh Grade	Jordan Carter 300 Hours Read	Antigone Russum 152 Hours Read	Cole Pleasanton 110 Hours Read	
Eighth Grade	Dawson Ludwig 10 Hours Read			
Teen Readers	Molly Weber 32 Books Read	Jameela Buchanan 21 Books Read	Bryan Weaver 20 Books Read	
Special Needs	Donna Shahan 274 Books Read	Victoria Hyland 13 Books Read		

During the 2nd Quarter, the Library hosted 49 Children's programs with a total of 955 attendees, 3 Young Adult programs with 26 attendees and 3 Adult programs with 30 attendees. The GED program continues to be at full capacity (14 students per session) twice a day, two days a week.

Also, during the same time period, the daily attendance at the library was 21,659 patrons with a daily average of 238 patrons. The library has 1485 active patrons. There were a total of 157 new card registrations (the breakdown is as follows: Smyrna 80; Clayton 48; Dover 7; Hartley 1; Lewes 1; Magnolia 1; Middletown 3; Newark 2; New Castle 2 and Townsend 12).

Public computers continue to be a large part of the services offered to the public through the Library. Public computer usage for April, May and June, 2014 was 2922, the public wireless usage was 572 and the student computer usage was 296.

The Library has generated revenue of \$170.16 from Donations; \$4,068.09 from Fines, fees, and copies; \$20, 558.70 from reciprocal borrowing; \$44,034.75 from the Delaware State Standards and 529.35 from special programs with a total revenue of \$69,361.05.

Planning and Zoning Department

Janet Vinc, Director

In August 2014, the Planning Director represented the Town of Smyrna as a panelist at the University of Delaware's conference, *Building Local Government Capacity for Market-Ready Communities*. Director Vinc served as the subject matter expert on issues related to Form-Based Codes. Other panelists included representatives from the Cities of Newark and Dover, New Castle County, DelDOT, and the Office of State Planning.

The Director also developed information for the Greater Kent Committee's/Kent Economic Partnership site availability initiative. This entailed visiting seven sites geographically in and around Smyrna, photographing them, and compiling information such as ownership, size/square footage, zoning classifications, permissible uses, and the like.

Finally, Director Vinc and staff are busily preparing Smyrna's application for the Downtown Development District Program (DDD). Sponsored by the State of Delaware, the DDD Program provides economic development incentives that promote revitalization of downtown areas.

Police Department

Norman Wood, Chief of Police

This past July, SPD's Community Policing Unit began to host *Coffee with a Cop* at the Bridgeway Family Restaurant (15 E. Glenwood Avenue). *Coffee with a Cop*, a national initiative developed by the United States Department of Justice - Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, is designed to facilitate meaningful discussions and build relationships between local police departments and the communities in which they serve.

The Smyrna Police Department's Junior Police Academy graduated in July 2014. The program is designed to teach students about all aspects of police work including patrol and criminal investigations, as well as special units such as the mounted unit, aviation, and SWAT.

Hundreds of residents participated in the town's ninth annual National Night Out held this past August 2014. This popular and informative event, held simultaneously in communities across the nation, is designed to heighten crime and drug prevention awareness, generate support for local anticrime efforts, and strengthen police-community partnerships. SPD officers were on hand to talk to residents and business owners about crime prevention techniques.

This past September, SPD teamed up with the United States Drug Enforcement Administration and Atlantic Apothecary in collecting 416 pounds of expired/unwanted prescription medication during the Annual National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day. The community has embraced the opportunity these Take-Back Day events provide to prevent pill abuse and theft by ridding their homes of potentially dangerous expired, unused, or unwanted prescription drugs. Unused medications in homes create a public health and safety concern, because they are highly susceptible to accidental ingestion, diversion, misuse, and abuse. Rates of prescription drug abuse in the U.S. are alarmingly high--more Americans currently abuse prescription drugs than the number of those using cocaine, hallucinogens, and heroin combined, according to the most recent National Survey on Drug Use and Health.

SPD also played in a charity softball game versus Clayton PD in September. Proceeds from the event were distributed to the Police Athletic League.

Public Information/Community Relations

Dawn Thompson, Public Information Officer (PIO)

The PIO was part of the team that planned the *Smyrna at Night 2: Country Music Block Party* which was held on October 16, 2014.

The PIO has also been working with the Delaware Emergency Management Agency to secure grant funding from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

The PIO has written a number of proclamations including: 9/11 Remembrance, Smyrna Safe Driving Week, Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month, Sympathy to the Family of Thomas Richard Burris, Retirement of Grant Prichard, and Congratulating Kelly J. Polito for service to Station 64.

Finally, the PIO is working with Councilmember John Embert and the Planning & Zoning Director in the planning and execution of the Town's Veteran's Day Recognition Program. The program, scheduled for November 6 at the Smyrna Opera House, is designed to annually honor seven local veterans who have served our town, state, and nation with valor, pride, and honor.

Public Works/Electric Department

Bill Evans, Director

With autumn upon us and the trees shedding their foliage, the Public Works Department (PW) has been busily collecting leaves from our streets. When storm drains or catch basins get clogged with recently fallen leaves and debris, water can no longer be drained from the street. The resulting water accumulates along streets and can flood intersections and homes.

The Delaware Municipal Electric Corporation (DEMEC), in partnership with the Town, is constructing a 1.5 megawatt solar photovoltaic generation facility to be located on approximately 6 acres at the end of Artisan Drive (adjacent to the Beasley Power Station). The facility will be managed by DEMEC, a public power joint action agency and wholesale electric utility established in 1979 to provide power supply and related services to the nine municipally-owned distribution utilities in the State of Delaware. Smyrna is a founding member of DEMEC.

The Commerce Street Utility Project is expected to be complete by the end of the year. The Green Meadows Electric Replacement Project is underway. PW Water Staff is also reviewing matters involving Well House #3.